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efn

Issue 190
September-November 2022
£1.50

Essex Folk News

for traditional music, dance and song in Essex and East London



Including....

The History of folk songs 4: Widecombe Fair

Memories of John Lagden

Modern Paganism for beginners part 3

Black-face minstrels - a reply

The Diary, Club Guide, news, reviews and fascinating bits and pieces



Essex Folk Association The 2022 Playford Ball

will be held on
Saturday 14th May 2022
7 - 10.45

Period costume appreciated.

Contact: Mary Bryan 01708 752057



efn has been published by the Essex Folk Association quarterly since

1973. It covers all Essex and East London folk activities, providing club listings, articles and reviews.

Contributions for any issue of efn will be welcomed. Please send letters, articles, suggestions, cartoons and photos (jpg preferred) to Celia Kemp.

NORMALLY, final copy dates are: January 21st, April 21st, July 21st, October 21st.

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Editor's thoughts

Oh dear! After the last issue, full of interesting articles, this one is a bit thin. I'm quite sure that is for the best of reasons - you are all out at last, dancing, singing and playing. And that's how it should be, but if you get a moment, why not write something about your own folk obsession, or memories, or inspiration?

Meanwhile, the EFA committee has a crisis and needs your support. Please read the appeal from Mary Bryan, the chairman. In particular we need committee members from the song and music side. Could you help?

CELIA KEMP

Cover picture: The slow release from lockdown: a six-person session at The Compasses in Littleley Green in May.

Who to contact

Articles, comments, photos, news and advert copy to the Editor:

Celia Kemp 07867 667756 editor@EssexFolk.uk

6 St. Mildred's Road, Chelmsford CM2 9PU

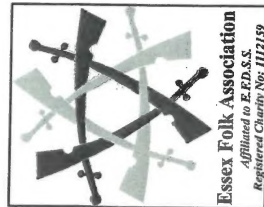
Diary/events/club listings: events@EssexFolk.uk

Membership / sales and distribution: membership@EssexFolk.uk

Keith Wright 01245 467513. 31 Butterfield Road, Boreham CM3 3BS

Payment for advertisements (see page 39) to the Treasurer:

Daphne Baker 01277 212102 'Chadstone', Shelley Road, Hutton, CM13 2SF



Essex Folk Association

Encourages and promotes knowledge, understanding, conservation and appreciation of folk arts, including music, song, dance, story-telling and related folklore and customs..

Services include: register of trainers, bands, performers and callers; liaison with the East Anglian Folk Council, regional and county sports and arts councils; the publication of **efn** and a website. For more information, links, amendments etc www.essexfolk.org

Chairman: Mary Bryan 01708 752057 chairman@essexfolk.uk
Secretary: Val Cleare 01245 842150 secretary@essexfolk.uk
Treasurer: Daphne Baker 01277 212102 'Chadstone', Shelley Road, Hutton, CM13 2SF
Committee: Terry Docherty, Celia Kemp.

ADVERTISING

Send as .jpg to the editor (details on page 1).

Back colour (colour)	£45
Inside back cover	£35
Full page	£30 (members £24)
Half page	£16 (members £13) (portrait or landscape)
Quarter page	£9 (members £7) (portrait or landscape)
Small ads	£3 about 20-30 words

There is a discount of 10% for four consecutive entries.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership of the Essex Folk Association entitles you to four issues of EFN delivered by post and discounts on advertising and EFA events.

Subscriptions:

Personal member £8

Joint members (two people at the same address) £10

Affiliate membership (clubs, bands, organisations etc.) £12

Contact: Mary Bryan 01708 752057 chairman@essexfolk.uk

AN APPEAL FOR HELPERS

Looking back over the EFA magazines I am always amazed how much talent we have through Folk in Essex and what a variety of events, artists, Morris teams, craft exhibitors, dance teams, music, dance and song clubs, festivals showing all the folk activities, youngsters dancing and performing, bands, Callers and many more people connected to folk which we had before "lockdown".

How grateful we should be to all the organisers, committees and all those who worked so hard behind the scenes to keep things running smoothly. I thank all of you, especially those who find it is now no longer viable to run clubs and events.

Sadly we lost many "Folkies" during the Covid crisis but each one of those, left behind a legacy, which lives on through what they achieved during their folk life!

I am proud to be Chairman of our folk world – which is beginning to reawaken after

Lockdown and will soon spring to life again. EFA has proved to be a real link with all these activities and really represents folk in Essex and beyond. I especially thank Celia who produces an excellent magazine each quarter. It travels as far as Australia!

HOWEVER -

I DESPERATELY WANT EFA TO CONTINUE BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We are at crisis point and need more people on the committee so that the many jobs that need doing can be shared out. Committee members can be people from any kind of folk - music, dance, song, morris or any part of the folk world.

As you can imagine a great deal goes on behind the scenes to keep EFA running efficiently. Keith Wright is standing down due to ill health. He has done a tremendous job over the years, gradually taking on more jobs as needed and we are so grateful for all he has done. A real star!!

THIS IS URGENT REQUEST FOR NEW PEOPLE TO JOIN US ON THE COMMITTEE

I had one reply of help when I last asked for help. Thank you very much Steve Bullock, President of the Victorian Folk Music Club for your message of support. Steve is our only member in Melbourne Australia.

PLEASE, PLEASE WOULD YOU CONSIDER JOINING US SO THAT EFA CAN CONTINUE?

If there is any way you can help please contact me as soon as possible.

We will of course keep you updated as, hopefully new people, will soon be willing to help keep EFA going strong.

I look forward to seeing some of you as folk activities begin again.

MARY BRYAN, EFA Chairman

01708 752057

Bits of news

JAN AYRES - A CELEBRATION OF HER LIFE September 11th

An invitation from her daughter Jem:

Due to Covid restrictions we were unable to gather for a proper send off for mum. She used to run her weekend Summer Sing Festival at the Lambourne End Centre, and she spoke of wanting her wake to be a festival....so here we are!

The event will start at midday and will continue with singing spots till late.

Those who wish to stay overnight can book camping (£7) or in-doors

accommodation (limited £10-£15) direct via Lambourne End centre: 020 8500 3047

Venue: Lambourne End Centre, Manor Road, RM4 1NB

Date: Saturday 11th Sept

Times: 12noon till late

Bring food to share for lunch.

We can pre-order fish & chips for the evening:

Fish & chips: £11

1/4 chicken & chips: £9

Veggie burger & chips: £8

Contact Jem with your fish & chip orders and for the payment details.

Any queries contact Jim: 07525175922

The GRAND CEILIDH CLUB IS BACK

Every Wednesday at the RNA club, East Street, Southend, Essex SS2 6LQ. For more details, contact Alexandra Parker 01702 713178. The Grand Ceilidh Club's Covid Code is: be vaccinated; don't come if you have symptoms; sanitise hands; keep a suitable distance; wear a face covering while dancing.

STORYTELLING

Shane Ibb, organiser of *Tall tales and Short Stories* in Chelmsford will be telling stories at the campfire at the Wild Weekend in Sussex, 4th & 5th September. If you are interested, look at the website at www.in2wild.com or their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/in2wild to The Wild Festivals.

OLD LEIGH SECRET SHANTY FEST September 11-12

Tony Prior announces 'Shanties, Songs of the Sea, Folk Dance and Drama, performed by Shanty Crews and Folk Artists'. More details from Tony 07805 641797 anthony.t.prior@gmail.com.

THE SALTS...



... will be at Epping Music Den on 14th September and Bungay Fisher Theatre on 17th September. They perform 'original material alongside their own interpretations of traditional songs' with 'great harmonies, all guaranteed to get the crowd singing and dancing along'. Details www.thesalts.co.uk.
Send us your album for review, lads.

EAST ANGLIAN MUSIC TRUST

The Trust (now sometimes called East Trust) has completed its move from the Museum of Anglian Life to Red Gables, still in Stowmarket. Three events are planned for this autumn: a sale of folk books and musical instruments, at Red Gables; an evening of song at the John Peel Centre on the same day; and an afternoon of talk, music and step dance at Great Yarmouth, fittingly called The Yarmouth Hornpipe. See *advert on page*

THE YARMOUTH HORNPIPE



On the recording on *Big-A-Boo-Boo*, Acosta's voice seems and Caracol, Percy Brown both sound as if they have other the two voices.



MARTYN WHITE MELODEONS

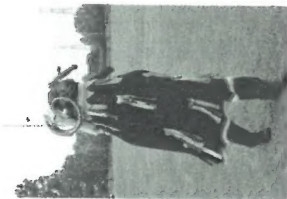
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UPDATES - CHINGFORD MORRIS

We had our first public performance at Waltham Abbey Town Show on June 27th, 2021, dancing in a grass arena, usually used as the premier grass football pitch at Town Mead, Waltham Abbey. We wore masks and carefully marked out the socially distanced dance area by sifting sawdust from a tub. We danced one of our new dances "Old Squire Ada" for the first time for the public. "Goldenballs" also came out of hibernation for the first time in 18 months, he was as frisky as ever! We were rewarded by the ice cream van who gave us all a very welcome 99.

We have been booked to dance out again at the beginning of August, where we will continue with our socially distanced dances, but we will be reintroducing the "Original Chingford Stick Dance".

HELEN WILSON



and BELCHAMP MORRIS

For a few months in Spring and early summer BM had some jolly times meeting outside the Red Lion, Belchamp Otten every other Sunday afternoon. We couldn't dance, play or sing, so we just had to talk to each other, drink beer and eat our picnics. In June the changed rules meant we could possibly have danced outside, depending on how you interpreted the guidelines. We met up on Monday evenings, our usual practice night, outside the Red Lion. The weather wasn't always kind to us: out of six weeks we had drizzle, cold or pouring rain or all three. For two of the weeks we didn't have enough chaps to dance. On the two occasions when the chaps have been able to show off their moves it has been great fun. We will carry on strutting our stuff and perfecting our routines so that we're ready for the bookings we have in the diary. We have no wish to disappoint our fans. Really hope these events go ahead and that we see lots of mates there.

We have been invited to dance at The Not-the-Summer-Solstice, instead it's Autumn Equinox (Mabon) at the Hawkedon Queen, Saturday 25th September 2021, late afternoon through to evening. With lots of other sides.

CATHY FITZGERALD, Baggie to Belchamp Morris

The Diary

Due to Covid-19 still it would be wise to check the situation with the club/group contact beforehand. Contact details are in the Club Guide. Dances are in *italics*, song and music events are in **Roman type**. It is best to contact the club organisers in advance for details of events (see the Club List for contact details) or subscribe to Keith Wright's 'EFA Event Updates' email service. EFN tries to maintain the accuracy of all information but cannot be held responsible for any consequences arising from mistakes which might occur. Diary entries are free. Send details to events@EssexFolk.uk

Thur Sept 2

LOUGHTON FOLK CLUB Al Neville

Tue Sept 7

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB Harp &

a Monkey

BILLERICAY FDC Sibby

MARKS TEY FDG Jacquie Terry

Tue Sept 7

HOY AT ANCHOR Chris Sherbern,

Denny Bartlett & Emily Sanders

Wed Sept 8

COLCHESTER FDC

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

8.00 - 10.00 p.m. Mary Bryan

Thur Sept 9

TOUCHSTONE FDC (Club resumes)

8-10 pm Caller tba

Sat Sept 11

WINCHMORE FDC DANCE 7.30- 10.30

Terry Elvins & The Forest Band

Mon Sept 13

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB Christina

Alden and Alex Patterson

Tue Sept 14

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB Double Header

Brown Boots & The Kimberleys

CHELMSFORD FOLK DANCERS Sibby

HOY AT ANCHOR Vicky Swan & Jonny

Dyer

Wed Sept 15

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG 8.00 -

10.00 p.m.

Thur Sept 16

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Mon Sept 20

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB Shackleton
Trio

Tue Sept 21

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB Shackleton Trio

BILLERICAY FDC Geoff Douglas

MARKS TEY FDG Nigel Gaspar

HOY AT ANCHOR 'Open Night'

Wed Sept 22

COLCHESTER FDC

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

Thur Sept 23

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Fri Sept 24

THE DOWNHAM TROUBADOURS

carlvaughan@btinternet.com

Sat Sept 25

THE HOY's 50th Anniversary Concert
7.00pm Arfur Do & The Toe-Rags, Jez

Lowe, Martin Carthy, & Granny's Attic.

From 12 noon to 5pm Hoy Singers

from past 50 years will be performing.

Contact Tony Prior 07805 641797

BELCHAMP MORRIS (Late afternoon to evening) The Not-the-Summer-Solstice, but the Autumn Equinox (Mabon) Instead at the Hawkedon Queen

Mon Sept 27

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB

The Thumping Tommys

Tue Sept 28

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB Miranda Sykes & Hannah Martin

BILLERICAY FDC Mary Bryan

THE HOY AT ANCHOR FOLK CLUB

Christina Alden & Alex Patterson

Wed Sept 29

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

Thur Sept 30

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Mon Oct 4

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB

John McCusker

Tue Oct 5

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB "The Trials of Cato" - THE CLUB'S 47th and 48th BIRTHDAYS!!

BILLERICAY FDC David Ashworth

MARKS TEY FDG Sylvia Gaspar

HOY AT ANCHOR Hunter Musket

Wed Oct 6

COLCHESTER FDC

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

Thur Oct 7

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Sat Oct 9

WINCHMORE FDC DANCE 7.30- 10.30 pm, Bob Barrett & The Forest Band (plus AGM)

Mon Oct 11

COLCHESTER FC Hunter Musket

Tue Oct 12

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB Tom Lewis
CHELMSFORD FOLK DANCERS Sibby
HOY AT ANCHOR Tom Lewis

Wed Oct 13

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

Thur Oct 14

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Sat Oct 16

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD DANCE
Band & Caller TBA. St Michael's Church
Hall, Gidea Park RM2 5EL. 5.00 - 9.00

Mon Oct 18

COLCHESTER FC Spiers & Boden

Tue Oct 19

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB Hunter Musket

BILLERICAY FDC Bob Scott (plus AGM)

CHELMSFORD FOLK DANCERS Susanne
Farmer

MARKS TEY FDG Jacquie Terry

HOY AT ANCHOR Open Night

Wed Oct 20

COLCHESTER FDC

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

Thur Oct 21

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Sat Oct 23

BILLERICAY FDC DANCE, 7-10.30 pm,
Sylvia & Nigel Gaspar with recorded
music. Tickets £9 in advance.

Mon Oct 25

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB Sam Lee

Tue Oct 26

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB The Tannahill
Weavers

BILLERICAY FDC Geoff Douglas

CHELMSFORD FOLK DANCERS Nigel
Gaspar

THE HOY AT ANCHOR FOLK CLUB

Wed Oct 27

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

Thur Oct 28

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Fri Oct 29

THE DOWNHAM TROUBADOURS
contact Carl Vaughan
carlvaughan@btinternet.com

Mon Nov 1

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB An evening
without Jake Thackray

Tue Nov 2

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB tbc

BILLERICAY FDC Sibby

HOY AT ANCHOR FOLK CLUB

MARKS TEY FDG Nigel Gaspar

Wed Nov 3

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

Thur Nov 4

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Tue Nov 9

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB Alden,

Patterson & Dashwood

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB Martin &

Eliza Carthy (NOT MONDAY!)

CHELMSFORD FOLK DANCERS David

Ashworth

THE HOY AT ANCHOR FOLK CLUB

Wed Nov 10

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

Thur Nov 11

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Sat Nov 13

WINCHMORE FDC DANCE 7.30 - 10.30
pm, Sheila Sturgess & The Forest Band.
Mon Nov 15

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB 'French Night'
with Bofi, Les Hirondelles, Gwendal
Moele and Paul Riley

Tue Nov 16

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB Anthony John
Clarke & Dave Pegg

BILLERICAY FDC Caller tba

CHELMSFORD FOLK DANCERS Sue Last

THE HOY AT ANCHOR FOLK CLUB

MARKS TEY FDG Sue Last

Wed Nov 17

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

Thur Nov 18

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Mon Nov 22

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB Blazing
Fiddles

Tue Nov 23

BILLERICAY FDC Caller tba

CHELMSFORD FOLK DANCERS Chris
Saunders

Wed Nov 24

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FDG

Thur Nov 25

TOUCHSTONE FDC Caller tba

Fri Nov 26

THE DOWNHAM TROUBADOURS

contact carlvaughan@btinternet.com

Sun Nov 28

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB Sam Sweeney
Band Folk Extra

Mon Nov 29

COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB Belshazzar's
Feast

Tue Nov 30

DARTFORD FOLK CLUB The Honeybees
BILLERICAY FDC Caller tba

CHELMSFORD FOLK DANCERS Anne
& Sibby

MARKS TEY FDG Caller tba



(Subject to Government Guidance)

Date Saturday September 4th

Time 7:30 - 11 pm

Place Gt. Baddow Parish Hall

CM2 7DW,

Caller Val McFarlane

Band Footnotes (Tony Trent)

Tickets £7 Pay at the door

Contact Frances Clarke

Tel 07796 191389

American Supper

Lives Remembered

Frederick (Fred) Sanders



It is with immense sadness and grief that we announce the passing of our dear friend, and Founder of the Belchamp Morris, Frederick Sanders. Frederick passed away at home on Monday 24th May surrounded by his beloved family.

Fred had Morris blood running through his veins – he founded The Belchamp Morris Men in the 1970's whilst living in Belchamp St Paul, and remained an active member whilst living in the Village.

He and the family moved to Glemsford in 1987 and a chance encounter led to the vicar of St Mary's church asking Frederick to form a Morris side for a "one-off" performance at the Church fete in 1988. Always up for hi-jinks and a challenge he set about forming a novice side and The Morris Men of Little Egypt were born.

Fred remained a core member and key musician and he was a source of infinite inspiration and energy. The enthusiasm for his many ideas and projects knew no bounds – and this passion and love of life, traditions and the Morris was infectious to all around him.

The suddenness of Frederick's passing had shaken us all to the very core, He truly was one of life's great characters. Frederick had made many friends in other Morris sides – bonded by a love of music and tradition and I know that you will all join us in our thoughts and condolences for his wife Binkie and daughters Deborah and Charlotte.

We remain devastated by his passing – we have lost our Founder, our inspiration, and a dear friend. The world will be a great deal less colourful from now.

Many more friends have been lost to us during Covid time, both through the virus and through other misfortunes. Since Covid has restricted our meetings, sometimes we have not heard the news for a long time. Among those so sadly lost to folk music and dance are Janet Barclay (remembered for her 'generosity of spirit and gentle humour'), Mick Graves ('one of life's true gentlemen and a person of great talent and modesty'), and Hilary Vare (well loved as a caller and musician). Obituaries will be included in the next issue of EFN.

East Anglian Traditional Music Trust

CELEBRATING 21 YEARS!

East Anglian Traditional Music Trust

CELEBRATING 21 YEARS!

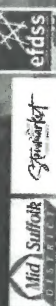
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East Anglian Traditional Music Trust

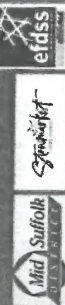
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SONGS.

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Belchamp Morris's 'Would I lie to you?' - the answers

I hope you all enjoyed reading last time's offering of Belchamp Morris' TRUE or LIES. I said that the answers would be printed in the next issue, this is TRUE. I also said that there might be a prize for the most correct answers, well, that was a LIE.

I asked members of Belchamp Morris to send me two sentences, one which was TRUE and one which was a LIE. Some of our members got so excited at the prospect of seeing their words in print that they had major problems following the brief. Some of them (Kieran and me included) got carried away and sent in more than the required two sentences. Some of them also found it hard to differentiate between TRUE and LIE.

If you refer to your copy of issue 188 you can check off your answers against the following:

Steve Penn (Gren)

He moved house to take up the Good Life, TRUE

He achieved all those feats with large numbers of walking, cycling, peanuts, oranges and coffee beans, TRUE

He played on some international recordings, TRUE

He watched those programmes with his wife, Liz, TRUE

He forgot to send any LIES, TRUE.

Bev Barnes stood for a local election, LIE.

She has a Bronze Medal for dancing, TRUE.

Martin Cooper found a diamond mullion window, TRUE.

His dogs wanted to fight off a badger, LIE.

Phil Brown volunteered to work in the woods, TRUE.

He joined a Shanty Choir, LIE.

John Bethell did lots of local bike rides, TRUE.

He grew a three-foot kiwi plant, LIE.

Nigel Lippiatt learnt to crochet, LIE.

He had a wonderful wedding day, TRUE

Derek Stokes made a wooden xylophone, LIE

He's found that his kit has shrunk, TRUE

He has found that his stick seems heavier and longer, could be either.

Marion Kent rode her Honda through the front door, TRUE.

She never came off her Honda, LIE.

Cathy & Kieran Fitzgerald played for a French bal, TRUE.

They had tattoos to remember the Peterloo Massacre, LIE. (see photo)

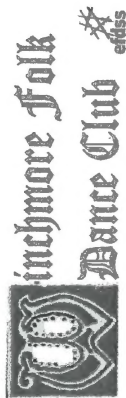
They gave up drinking beer, LIE.

Cathy sewed face coverings and scrubs bags, TRUE

Over the last year Kieran wore a mask for 45 hours and didn't for 8715 hours, TRUE.

CATHY FITZGERALD, Baggie to Belchamp Morris





Second Saturday of the month Dances start promptly at 7.30

Trinity Church Hall

Church Street/Gentleman's Row Enfield EN2 6AN

September 11th Andrea Stodell
October 9th [7pm AGM] Bob Barrett
November 13th Bob Barrett
December 11th Sheila Sturgess
Peter Leatham

Live Music Chris Carpenter

Membership Fee £7 plus £5.00 per Dance
Guests £7.00 per Dance

Dancing also from **September 2021** Tuesdays 10am to 12 noon at

Winchmore Hill United Reform Church
77 Compton Road N21 3NU

For more information Gillian 0208 360 6226.



COLCHESTER FOLK CLUB
Colchester Arts Centre
Church Street,
Colchester CO1 1NF
Monday nights except *

Monday 6th September Les Barker
Monday 13th September Christina

Alden and Alex Patterson

Monday 20th September Shackleton Trio

Monday 27th The Thumping Tommys

Monday 4th October John McCusker

Monday 11th October Hunter Musket

Monday 18th October Spiers and Boden

Monday 25th October Sam Lee

Monday 1st November An Evening Without Jake
Thackray

*Tuesday 9th November Martin and Eliza Carthy

Monday 15th November French Night with Boff

Les Hirondelles and Gwendal Moele and Paul Riley.

Monday 22nd November Blazing Fiddles

*Sunday 28th November Sam Sweeney Band

Monday 29th November Belshazzar's Feast

To join the mailing list, e mail
colchester.folk.club@gmail.com

Box Office and Info 01206 500900
www.colchesterartscentre.com

MEMORIES OF A TRUE ENGLISH DANCING MASTER

JOHN LAGDEN

WHO TAUGHT MANY OF US OUR DANCING SKILLS

John Lagden and his constant companion at dances Lena Rees travelled the length and breadth of Southern England and occasionally to Holland where John was the Caller at many dances. He would think nothing of going to Norwich to call at an evening dance.

I was lucky to know him in my early twenties by joining Chigwell Row Club. He would never drive on a motorway preferring a B Road - consequently for a Saturday dance, say in Brighton, we would leave midday and get there by 7 pm which usually involved a picnic half way - always pork pies, scotch eggs and apricot cordial. The same on the way back about 2 am, we would stop somewhere to picnic. His old car was legendary - once at a set of traffic lights, his gear lever came off in his hand. John, Lena, myself and a companion were all dressed in Playford Costume. Luckily there was a police presence on sight. When John explained he was the Caller at a big dance, a police car took us to the dance, lights flashing and sirens to get us there on time!

John knew some amazing people in the folk world. He was close friends with Fried de Metz and frequently stayed in Holland with her. One Saturday when he was going to call at Cecil Sharp House, John, Lena and I were invited to tea on the lawn at a lovely cottage, where I met a charming lady. She showed John her violin which was old and battered. I later found out that she was the daughter of Vaughn Williams and the violin was her father's, and a Stradivarius!

I met many famous musicians and callers in the folk world without knowing it. Looking back there were many happy incidents, all overcome with good nature and lots of laughter! One such incident, again the four of us in Playford Costume, were going to St Albans - Lena and friend in the back, John and me in front and me holding a big basket of sandwiches on my lap. Lena had made a big trifle and a jelly which she put on the ledge under the back window. This was fine until John had to brake suddenly, crowning Lena, head to toe in trifle and jelly. Much humour as she had to go in the dance hall covered in jelly and the ladies had to clean her up! John had the most amazing ability as a caller, to play the piano, call the dance and correct dancers at the same time. (Over the mic. 'Bob, you're on the wrong side. Cross over'.)

He was a superb dancing master and was partner to Princess Margaret when she was inaugurated as President of EFDSS.

I will always remember him, always immaculately dressed and he never lost his temper (even with us novices). He always promoted little clubs, selling their dance tickets and taking people to dances. John worked tirelessly for folk and, if anyone deserved a Gold Badge from EFDSS he did!

BOB BRYAN

ROMFORD & BRENTWOOD FOLK DANCE GROUP

Autumn Dance

M.C. Mary Bryan

Music by Chris Carpenter

St. Michael's Church Hall,

Main Road, Gidea Park, RM2 5EL

Saturday 16th October 2021

5pm to 9 pm

Tickets £9

Bring a plate of food to share

Hot and cold drinks provided

Info: 'phone Mary on 01708 752057

Widcombe Fair

The history of folk song - no. 4: Widcombe Fair

As Halloween is fast approaching I thought I'd cover the history of a rather ghoulish song, Widcombe Fair – possibly the most well-known of all English folk songs. The version everyone now knows originated in the adjacent villages of Spreyton and Sticklepath, near Dartmoor in Devon. It was collected and published in 1890 by the great folk song collector, the Reverend Sabine Baring Gould, now mainly remembered for having written *Onward Christian Soldiers*.

Gould was told by his sources – and many people in that area still believe – that the song was based on real people and a real event; but there's no historical evidence for this and most historians think it unlikely. The song probably dates back to the 18th century, well before there was a Fair in Widcombe – and early versions of the song are about Hoodycock Fair, a nonsensical name.

Long before Gould published it, versions of the song were being sung all over the West Country and as far afield as Liverpool. But the one Gould collected stuck in the popular imagination and is now sung all over the world – perhaps because it's the most atmospheric and fun variant; and one of the easiest to sing along with.

It's also possibly the only folk song that has ever given rise to a new phrase in the English language – people say "Uncle Tom Cobley and all" when they mean "everyone and anyone"; and several scientific papers have jokingly listed "Cobley, UT" at the end of a long list of the papers' authors!

The village of Spreyton boasts a pub called The Tom Cobley Tavern; and Sticklepath hosts an annual event at Halloween called the Sticklepath Grey Mare Festival, in which the villagers process around the town searching for the ghost of Tom Pearce's grey mare – accompanied by minstrels, who play seasonal folk songs including Widcombe Fair. Every so often someone disguised as the ghost of one of the characters in the song pops up and gives them directions. Eventually they find the grey mare's ghost (actually a female Morris dancer wearing a sheet and a real horse's skull) behind the village hall; and she leads them on a dance into the hall. They end up in a nearby pub, where a rhyming mummer's play is performed – in which the ghosts of the seven riders atone for having flogged the poor mare to death on the way back from Widcombe.

The word "skirling" in the final verse is Devon dialect for "wailing".

The historian Dr Todd Gray has written an entire book about the origins of the song – see <https://tinyurl.com/aratdf5s> for details. A facsimile of Gould's original manuscript is at <https://tinyurl.com/39fk5fy3> and his notes on the song are at <https://tinyurl.com/38pn7e4c>.

DAVE RADO

Tom Pearce, Tom Pearce, lend me your grey mare.
All along, down along, out along lea.
For I want for to go to Widcombe Fair,
With Bill Brewer, Jan Stewer, Peter Gurney,
Peter Davy, Dan'l Whiddon, Harry Hawke,
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all,
Old Uncle Tom Cobley and all.

And when shall I see again my grey mare?
All along, down along, out along lea.
By Friday soon, or Saturday noon,
With Bill Brewer.....

So they harnessed and bridled the old grey mare.
All along, down along, out along lea.
And off they drove to Widcombe fair,
With Bill Brewer.....

Then Friday came, and Saturday noon.
All along, down along, out along lea.
But Tom Pearce's old mare hath not trotted home,
With Bill Brewer.....

So Tom Pearce, he got up to the top o' the hill.
All along, down along, out along lea.
And he seed his old mare down a-making her will,
With Bill Brewer.....

So Tom Pearce's old mare, her took sick and died.
All along, down along, out along lea.
And Tom he sat down on a stone, and he cried
With Bill Brewer.....

But this isn't the end o' this shocking affair.
All along, down along, out along lea.
Nor, though they be dead, of the horrid career
Of Bill Brewer...

When the wind whistles cold on the moor of the night.

All along, down along, out along lea.
Tom Pearce's old mare doth appear ghastly white,
With Bill Brewer.....

And all the long night be heard skirling and groans.
All along, down along, out along lea.
From Tom Pearce's old mare in her rattling bones,
With Bill Brewer.....



MODERN PAGANISM FOR BEGINNERS

part 3: Celebrations, Beliefs and Gods

Most people are aware of celebrations of the Summer Solstice at Stonehenge, and other Neolithic sacred sites. Pagans are attracted to these places, partly for their romantic atmosphere, where spiritual experiences seem possible, but because many Henges and Stone Circles are aligned to sunrise or sunset at either Summer or Winter Solstice. Pagans believe that our ancestors held seasonal rituals at these times, and continue 'The Old Ways' into the present.

Pagans 'celebrate' rather than 'worship'. Worshipping implies veneration through abasement: celebration is joyous revelry to mark a festival. For Pagans, spiritual reverence is experienced through deep connection to the natural world, the cycles of life and passage of the seasons. Pagans see themselves as an integral part of the universe, not as 'masters of creation'. The mystical belief *Animism* explains that the divine life force or spirit (universal soul) permeates all material things; animal, vegetable and mineral. From this, some ancients saw the Earth as Gaia, the Goddess, *The Mother* or the divine feminine principle, bringing rebirth and renewal. It wasn't just a source of mineral resources or somewhere to bury polluted waste. Sharing this view, many modern Pagans often become ecological sympathisers or activists, while others work in jobs helping people or animals or supporting the environment.

Pagans share a mystical belief in the interconnection of the spiritual plane with the physical plane, benefitting both humankind and the planet. Symbolically this is the Tree of Life or the *Web of Wyrd* (wyrd = destiny), a complex, multi-dimensional spider's web connecting all things, individuals, times and places, accessed through meditation for purposes of divination or for influencing outcomes of 'spellwork' or magic.

Belief in magic assumes that unrelated events are causally connected, the result of supernatural effects: one person's mental intent focussed through a *spell* to achieve an outcome. Various techniques are employed, almost like a recipe for ingredients: candles, colours, herbs, days of the week, phases of the moon. These are *correspondences* that in the right combination help make magic happen, by achieving

states of mind needed to attain the best effect. These correspondences and symbols can also aid exploring the mysteries of life, and may date back to Classical or Medieval occult systems. Many people think magic is the stuff of fairy tales, but recently, quantum physics has proved that some claims for magic show this approach really works! Ever tried dowsing?

Many Pagans wear symbolic silver jewellery as a statement of identity, showing Pentacles, Thor's Hammer or the Awen, a Druid symbol of inspiration. The Pentacle's five points represent the elements of earth, air, fire and water together with spirit, bounded by a circle for unity and eternity, a positive, protective symbol (never a symbol of Satan, as tabloid newspapers sometimes claim, Pagans have no concept of Satan – he's a historical Jewish character). Thor's Hammer protects his devotees. The Tree of Life links the underworld at its roots with the middle earth of physical existence - the trunk, while the branches reach to the heavens, providing food and shelter for all creatures. In Norse culture, *Yggdrasil*, the World Tree, links the nine worlds of men, giants and Gods.

Gods revered by individual Pagans are by personal choice. There is no divine scripture, but mythological tales, often early Medieval writings, translated from Icelandic, Irish or Welsh sources together with a rich seam of folkloric legend, provide heroes and pantheons of deities. Characters may be seen as archetypes, each bestowing their sublime qualities onto believers. Cernunnos, the Celtic Lord of beasts may appeal to someone who loves woodland and wild nature. A strong woman may choose Andraste, British warrior Goddess whose name means 'Invincible'. Each can be viewed as a real person or representing a concept – it's a matter of personal belief.

Many Pagans have lost faith in the artificiality and consumerism of the modern world. Established religions have faded. Paganism provides an alternative, if for you, the natural world is more important than human supremacy. Anyone can celebrate the cycles of life and the passage of the seasons. You can revel in the beauty of the earth without having to focus on a 'Creator'. In Paganism there is no hierarchy dictating an authorised version of scripture. Pagans attempt to find the divine in what speaks to them personally, a form of gnosis, fuelling their spirituality (a real need for everyone), it's a lifetime's journey, and it's fun! To Pagans, life is for the enjoyment of living. And after? the Summerland or Valhalla are Pagan heavens, or reincarnation for those who are still striving for enlightenment.

KAREN CATER



BILLERICAY FOLK DANCE CLUB

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BLACK-FACE MINSTRELS - a reply

Re your 'Black-face Minstrels in 1850' article in the last EFN issue. It's been stated on numerous occasions in Morris circles that blacking up is no ancient Morris tradition, is barely more than 150 years old, and has its origins in the arrival of American-style minstrels in the UK. If it's said often enough, people will believe it, and perhaps many choose to do so because it meets their preconceptions. In this case they absolutely should not believe it.

The first record of a blacked-up minstrel in the UK was in 1836, the next (with a banjo) in 1843. From the late 1850s it was a popular entertainment on the stage and in the streets by strolling players. Confined to cities and the larger towns, minstrels didn't venture out into the surrounding countryside let alone wander into the wilds of Border Morris country. Minstrels' popularity began to wane about 1885.

Look at this logically. Why would a Morris dancing side copy a singing act? Why would such an apparently-compelling idea only catch on in Welsh Border country? Why didn't Border Morris sides have whitened eyes and lips? Why didn't they have banjos? No documented evidence and no academic research (including those quoted in recent Ring circulars) suggest minstrels were the cause of blackfacing in Morris. To suggest as much is not just illogical, it is not historical.

The Ring's archives and its own publications give specific dates for blacked up Border Morris sides as follows:

Bridgenorth Morris Men in 1800, Pershore 1848, Britannia Coconut Dancers 1857, Bromdon in 1858. There are lots more undated early records and lots more dated later ones.

Although Broseley Morris Men are documented as blacked up in 1885, they existed in a seemingly unbroken tradition from at least 1652. And according to the Fletts' research there was a side fined 40/- in the 1500s for dancing with their faces "maskit and with bellis" – maskit meaning concealed.

It is clear that blacking up in Morris has existed for more than 220 years (at the very least) and pre-dates the arrival of minstrelsy. Whether you believe its origins lie in ritual magic and disguise or begging and anonymity, the notion of a 'long tradition' for blacking up existing long before the time of American minstrels is a fact.

The anti-blackfacing argument (and cancel culture in general) proceeds from a fundamentally demeaning view of the status and agency of minorities. As Prof. John McWhorter of Columbia University has argued, the notion that black people need to be protected from these supposed harms, infantilizes them: "In supposing that black people have no resilience, you are saying that black people are unusually weak."



You're saying that we are lesser. You're saying that we, because of the circumstances of... social history, cannot be treated as adults." An ideology that insists that black people can only advance by being shielded from the harms of supposed historical and cultural offences is as belittling of them as it is destructive of the unity that all societies need to thrive. Cultural subversion is wrong; it should not be encouraged.

I note that the article began with "Whether racist or not, it is now considered offensive to dance with blacked faces...." This is an opinion and not a statement of fact. As such it is of course highly contentious. It is the 'offended' that are being racist in denying the host culture its folk traditions (the Leitkultur). I note that none is suggesting that the traditional 'whitefacing' customs of New Guinea Mudmen or Africa's Kikuyu and Maasai or even of Notting Hill Carnival revellers is offensive. The whole argument has been presented the wrong way round. In England guilt is not presumed until proven innocent; innocence is presumed until proven guilty. It's not up to Morris dancers to prove blacking up is historic, it is up to its opponents to prove it is not. In this case the epistemological approach applies. Before written records began, it is presumed English was spoken in this land. You do not have to prove it was. What is, was. Blacking up is and therefore was, until proven otherwise.

JULIAN WHYBRA

Editor's note: Julian is quite right about the history of blackface morris. The article was a brief history of blackface minstrels in the 19th century. Any link with morris dancing may be just in the minds of the public, but it is public opinion that has led to the partial ban on blacked-up faces.



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EFA members with something to offer

Listing is free to EFA members, but the Essex Folk Association cannot guarantee the standard of any service offered here.

Martyn White	Anglo Concertina and Melodeon Player, Melodeon Repairs	01245 473720
Mary Bryan	Caller : Clubs, Barn Dance/Dance Teacher (Playford & English)	01708 752057
Hilary Vare	Caller + holiday/workshop dance leadership (Playford - now)	0208 360 6846
Sue Last	Caller: Barn Dances/Scottish/Ceilidhs, etc.(with/without Band	07860 297097
Dave Record	Caller with records (or band): schools, folk dance/public talks	01702 234071
Keith Baxter	Caller with Band; work in schools; Maypole Dance organiser	07512 064757
Jeremy Jones	Fiddler and Composer of traditional-style tunes	1255 551434/07775 507900
Jill Palmer-Swift	Hammer Dulcimer player	01277 355010
Pam & Jon Fitzgerald	'Hunt the Wren' Barn Dances and Pub Gigs	01255 674889
Paul McCann	Musician: Concertina/Melodeon/Accordion for any occasion	01277 353388
Paddy Beadle	Musician: Band & Caller available : Electrician: P.A.T. Testing.	07768 074976
Vicki Swan	Performer/Teacher - Caperbility Dance Band	01376 584105
Mickie D' (Mick Davison)	Folk-Rock band available. Leigh Folk Festival contact	07741 738915
Chris Gasper	'Punch & Judy' entertainer	01702 612783
Tony Prior	Singer/Songwriter/Guitarist	01702 715111
The Hoy Shanty Crew	Shanties/Drinking Songs to liven up any folk event.	07805 641797
Rick Christian	Singer/Songwriter/Guitarist	01621 859561
Dennis Homes	Singer/Songwriter/Guitarist & Poet	07712 565590
Michael Chapman	Solo Guitar for Weddings, etc. Private Tuition.	01277 231522
Karen & Colin Cater	Song performance; Design Services; Talks	01787 462731
Peter Optical	Storyteller/Musician	01702 715882
Edric H. Field	Audio and P.A. Repairs, PAT Testing	01621 862608/07968 314069
Jane & Steve Bullock	'Delia's Friends' (Country Dance Band in Australia) steve@jeevesaudio.com.au	
John Parsons	Caller for Barn Dances/Ceilidhs	01245 467322

Need a Band?

EFA members are listed here free of charge, but **efn** and the Essex Folk Association cannot guarantee the standard of any band on this list.

Caperbility	Ceilidh, Contra, Playford, Medieval, Regency, Victorian costume	01376 584105
Famous Potatoes	8 piece band - mainly U.S. style for gigs or dances	01702 341889
Free Range Legs	Barn Dance band with Caller.	01245 360082
Grand Reunion	High-energy Folk-Rock Band for Pubs, Clubs, Gigs, Functions.	07741 738915
Hunt the Wren	Band with Caller for all occasions	01255 674889
Metric Foot Band	Versatile Dance Band, with Caller	01621 853941
Rackett Companie of Musick	Olde English Folk-Rock/historic folk music.	01206 384591
Skylarking Ceilidh Band	Band with Caller.	01359 244692
Spring Heel Jacks	Lively Ceilidh/Barn Dance Band, with Caller, for any occasion.	01245 467322
St. George Barn Dance Band	Barn Dance Band and Caller for all occasions.	01245 257614
The Most Unexpected Barn Dance Band	Parties, Barn Dances, Weddings, or Ceilidhs.	07702 016742

Club Guide

As Covid-19 is still affecting the plans of many clubs, this list just gives contacts. Contact the club to check whether normal meetings have been resumed.

Folk song clubs and singarounds

MONDAYS

Colchester Folk Club Elaine Barker 01206 500900 (Box Office)

Jingling Gate Folk Club Pete Hamlyn 01268 755523

petergthamlyn@googlemail.com

Waltham Abbey Folk Club www.walthamabbeyfolkclub.com

TUESDAYS

Dartford Folk Club Marj Mitchell 01322 277218 hawleymkm@aol.com

Romford Folk Club Garry Walker 07534 029702 romfolk@live.co.uk

The Hoy at Anchor Folk Club Mick Denny mick@bighandcreative.co.uk

WEDNESDAYS

Epping Folk Club Trevor Krueger 07977 026533 www.eppingfolkclub.com

Haverfolk Ali Rose 07980 370 536 haverfolk@gmail.com

Hoy Singers Session Tony Prior 07805 641797 anthony.t.prior@gmail.com

Music in Rowhedge Ron 01206 729029 Susan 01206 728468

Duchy Folk Club Dick Spanner 01206 241936

THURSDAYS

Acoustic Club Jessica Brett 01992 677992 jessbrett@googlemail.com

Chelmsford Acoustic Club Roy Martin 07443 456334 randmdanbury@gmail.com

Great Bardfield Folk Club Ray Taylor 07881 074412 greatbardfieldfolkclub@surfantime.net

Islington Folk Club Nick Moran 122 Plimsoll Rd, N4 2ED enquiries@islingtonfolkclub.co.uk

Loughton Folk Club Carol Woodward 07892 745665 loughtonfolkclub@gmail.com

Witham Sing and Play Arounuds Ian & Joan Smith 07967 125514 (Joan Smith)

ian.f.smith@hotmail.co.uk

Wivenhoe Folk Club Denise Van Loen 01206 827759 a.v.l@lineone.net

FRIDAYS

The Downham Troubadours Carl Vaughan carlvaughan@btinternet.com

Runningwell Acoustic Music Club Kelvin Ward runningwell@btinternet.com

Live at the Institute Tony Winn 01376 571775 tony.winn@btinternet.com

Preview Live Music Club David Anton 01702 341263 david_anton41@yahoo.com

Southend Irish Association Dave O'Neill 01268 727025 oneilldave@aol.com

SATURDAYS

SlackFolk Richard Brazear 07850 773291 info.slackfolk@gmail.com

SUNDAYS

FaBClub Liz Montgomery 01375 387071 Fabclubgrays@btinternet.com



Hitchin Folk Club Maureen & Keiron Jones 01462 812391 goodmusic@hitchinfolkclub.co.uk
Sail Loft Folk Club Malcolm Gillham 07930 417586 malcolm.gillham47@gmail .com
Thameside Folk Clive Paish 0208 2625118 c.paish@sky.com www.essexwt.org.uk
Walthamstow Folk Club Russ Chandler 0208 5247285 russ@russchandler.com

Sessions and music

MONDAYS,,

Compasses Inn Session, Myles Barrett, 07831 815134, myles.barrett@btinternet.com

The Old Station Session (formerly Yardarm Session), Terry Docherty, 07845 717508,

The Yardarm Folk Orchestra, Malcolm Reid, 07586 083669,

yardarmfolkorchestra@outlook.com

Salt Water and Beer (Shanty Singers) "Mike Free Zone", Tom Whelan, 07801 143949,

tom.whelanbass@btinternet.com

TUESDAYS,,

Chelmsford (The Queens Head) Music Session, Edric Field, 07968 314069/01621 862608,

edricg8bmr@gmail.com

Chelmsford (The Orange Tree) Music Session, Peter Kemp, 01245 263753,

peter.kemp@dsl.pipex.com

Colchester (The Ale House) Music Session, Kieran & Cathy Fitzgerald, , kieransgm@gmail.com

WEDNESDAYS,,

Hoy Shanty Crew, Allan Barttram, 07989 456161,

Hoy Tunes Session, Yael Bebb, , whitediablo@hotmail.com

Hoy Singers, Tony Prior, 07805 641797, anthony.t.prior@gmail.com

Dengie Music Session, Meg Crawford, 01621 783965, meg-c@sky.com

Dengie Music Session, Meg Crawford, 01621 783965, meg-c@sky.com

Mersea Acoustic Music Session, Juliet Doyle, 01206 386736,

www.merseason@blogspot.com

Dengie Music Session, Meg Crawford, 01621 783965, meg-c@sky.com

Southminster Music Session, Edric Field, 07968 314069/01621 862608,

edricg8bmr@gmail.com

Walnut Tree 2nd Thursday Session, Paul McCann, 07947 217840, pauldmccann@hotmail.com

Dengie Music Session, Meg Crawford, 01621 783965, meg-c@sky.com

FRIDAYS,,

The Green Man Session, John Haste, , j.haste@blueyonder.co.uk

The Leather Bottle Music Session, Martyn White, 07885 265925, martynwhite1@live.co.uk

Colchester Waits (Shawm Club), Lizzie Gutterage, 07762 015645,

elizabeth.gutteridge@btinternet.com

Roxwell Music Session, Edric Field, 07968 314069/01621 862608, edricg8bmr@gmail.com

The Clubhouse Session (Bradwell), Edric Field, 07968 314069/01621 862608,

edricg8bmr@gmail.com

The Swan Session (Little Totham), Edric Field, 07968 314069/01621 862608,

edricg8bmr@gmail.com

Music in Rowhedge, Ron 01206 729029, Susan 01206 728468,

SUNDAYS,,

Duton Hill Acoustic Music Session, Chris Brimley, 01245 360082,

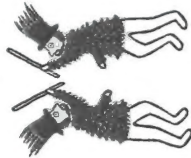
chrisbrimleymusic@gmail.com

Chelmsford (The Woolpack) Music Session,,

English Music Session (Borough), Martin Nail,, info@islingtonfolkclub.co.uk

Shanty and Sea Songs Session, Garry Walker, 07534 029702,

Morris and other dance display clubs



COTSWOLD MORRIS

Blackmore Morris Hamish Bremner, 01279 413962,

blackmoremorris@gmail.com

Chelmsford Morris (Men) Celia Kemp, 01245 263753 cmbagman@gmail.com

Chingford Morris Men Helen Wilson, 01992 712765, chingford.morris@gmail.com

Colchester Morris Men Russ Smith, bagman@colchestermorrismen.org

Hands Around Basilidon Morris (mixed) June Wells, 01268 521645,

Leading Lights Morris (mixed) Maggie Schooler, 01255 504590,

margaret.schooler@tiscali.co.uk

Maldon Greenjackets Morris (mixed) Dave/Linda Kelly, 01621 851164,

maldongreenjackets@hotmail.co.uk

Mayflower Morris Men Geoff Douglas, 01277 650631, bagman@mayflowermorris.com

Morrismen of Little Egypt Mike Sewell, 01787 280145, mike_sewell53@yahoo.co.uk

Royal Liberty Morris (mixed)

Rumford Morris Men Sue Fuller, 01375 374648, rumfordmorris@hotmail.com

Thaxted Morris Men Chris Bull,, cbull1@btinternet.com

Upstreet Morris Suzanne Eccleston, 0208 550 2470,

BORDER MORRIS

Belchamp Morris Derek Stokes, 01787 269284, info@belchampmorrismen.co.uk

Dark Horse Morris Liz Jeary, 01621 742488, darkhorsemorris@yahoo.co.uk

Mehalah Morris (Mixed-Men and Women) Nina Stevens, 07538 46232,

playisland@gmail.com

Priority Morris Miriam Russel, 01255 822481,

NORTH-WEST (CLOG) MORRIS

Alive & Kicking North West Morris (mixed) Sylvia Bullen-Bell, 01245 222604,

bullebell@btinternet.com www.maldonmorris.org

AnnieMation Clog (Mixed, Men & Women) Ian Parker, 01206 577222,

anniemationclog@gmail.com

Blackhorse and Standard Women's North West Morris Carol McGuinness, 0208 514 8771,

Blackhorseandstandard@goolemail.com

Bows 'n' Belles North West Morris (women) Sue Pratt, 01206 240682,

bowsnbellesclog@yahoo.co.uk

Chelmsford Morris (women) Celia Kemp, 01245 263753, cmbagman@gmail.com

Cockleshell Clog (mixed) Mary Storrar, 01702 218081, cockleshellclog@live.co.uk

Fiddlers Brook Morris (mixed) Gill Munro, 01279 723707, neilandgillmunro@aol.com.

Rising Larks (women) Sue Curd, 01473 811742 (Mobile 0777 9674870),

susiecurd@hotmail.co.uk

MOLLY DANCES

The Good Easter Molly Dancers Simon Tarrant 01245 231437 tarrant.simon@outlook.om

INTERNATIONAL AND HISTORICAL DANCING

Aswan Egyptian Dancers Gayla Rowling gayladenise@hotmail.com

Benazir Eastern Dance Troupe Rosie Flint 01277 374378

Colchester Historical Dance (mixed) Caroline Rudd caroline_rudd@yahoo.co.uk

Flamenco Ole Jennifer Godwin 01277 355423 the.godwins@btinternet.com

Maureen Corr Irish Dancers Maureen Corr 01277 230788

Platypus Appalachian Kathie Bamforth 01206 241266

Social Dance clubs

MONDAYS

Bulmer Folk Dance Club, Peter Rowe, 01787 375935,

Clacton & District Caledonian Society, Sue Curd, 01473 811742,

Ingatestone Circle Dance (Experienced), Jan Shedal, 01277 352213,

bryanshedal@goolemail.com

Leigh on Sea Caledonian Dancers, Ray Helliard, 01702 343019,

SandonScottish Country Dance Club Chelmsford, Eric Johnston, 01245 352373,

eric@satsig.net

Southend Irish Association (Set Dancing Classes), Ann-Marie, 07734 350187,

Scottish Country Dancing for Fun, Sue Last, 01206 303338/07860 297907,

Triangle Folk Dance Club, Liz Bruce, 01255 676960,

TUESDAYS

Billericay Folk Dance Club, Helen Allison, 01268 541059,

Chelmsford Folk Dancers, Frances Clarke, 07796 191389, francesclarke1628@gmail.com

Chingford Folk Dance Club, Suzanne Harper, 0208 508 4770, mail@candsharper.plus.com

Grange Scottish Country Dancing, Doris Swinney, 01268 784549, kendor@freezone.co.uk

Harlow & Dist. Caledonian Society, Ray Dyke, 01279 436526,

Marks Tey English Folk Dance Group, Sylvia Gaspar, 01787 204033,

sylviasgaspar@hotmail.co.uk

Rochford Folk Dance Group, Hazel Jones, 01268 786245,

Thaxted Country Dance Club, Simon 01371 830804,, simon@melodeonmania.demon.co.uk

Winchmore Folk Dance Club, Gillian West, 0208 360 6226,

WEDNESDAYS

Colchester Folk Dance Club, Tom Grady, 01206 549176, tomjgrady@gmail.com



Grand Ceilidh Club, Alexandra Parker, 01702 553622,
 Pret a Danser, Linda Jones, 01206 868654 / 07952 120227, lindalce@ones@hotmail.com
Romford & Brentwood Folk Dance Group, Mary Bryan, , southendflamenco@gmail.com
 Southend Flamenco, Michael Smith, 01702 465244,
Witham & District Caledonian Society, Beryl Munro, 01621 850838,

THURSDAYS

Barley Leaf Folk Dance Club, Sheila Skippins, 0208 597 2874, sheilaskippins@hotmail.co.uk
 Ongar Circle Dance (Experienced), ,
 Southend Flamenco, Michael Smith, 01702 465244, southendflamenco@gmail.com
 Scottish Country Dance Club, Sue Last, 07860 297907,
Touchstone Folk Dance Club, Elaine Wood, 01206 822877,

FRIDAYS

File Gumbo, File Gumbo, 0208 3672439,
 Colchester Ceilidh Club, , colceilidh@aol.com
 South East Essex Scottish Society, Graham Easton, 01702 587808,
graham.easton@btinternet.com
 Great Parndon Folk Dance Club, Jenny Wyatt, 01799 550393,
 Tollesbury Folk Dance Club, Jon Naunton, 07799 550393, naunton@btinternet.com
 Brightlingsea Folk Dance Club, Sue Last, 01206 30338/07860 297907,

SATURDAYS

London Barndance Company, Andrew Findlay, 01628 78255, home@barndance.org
Winchmore Folk Dance Club, Gillian West, 0208 360 6226 ,

SUNDAYS

The Friends of Cecil Sharp House, Judith De Witt, 07949 147165, judith@fcsh.org.uk
 Quadrille Club, Ellis & Chris Rogers, 01689 600 768, quadrille.ellisrogers@bigfoot.com

Poetry and Story-telling

Southend Poetry Group, John Debenham 01702 474673
www.southendpoetry.co.uk
 Tales at the Fold (Story-Telling) Carl Merry 01268 767770 carl.tale-spinner@blueyonder.co.uk
 An Evening of Tall Tales and Short Stories Shane Ibbs 07709 904053
www.storytellershane.co.uk

Leigh Story Telling Circle, John Barr 01702 558139
 Pint of Tales at The Alex by Spinning Yarns, June Wells 01268 521645
 Essex Storytellers, Carl Merry 01268 767770 carl.tale-spinner@blueyonder.co.uk

Reviews



SEASPEAK: Songs and stories from the National Maritime Museum Joe Danks



Seaspeak is a product of the Musicians in Museums collaboration between EFDSS, Help Musicians UK and, in this instance, the National Maritime Museum. Danks spent a year with the NMM and the ensuing album is a fine tribute, both to the sheer breadth and diversity of the Museum's content and to the instrumental and creative versatility of Danks and his ensemble. The album's ten tracks comprise a mixture of traditional and original material, including a mighty folk-rock reworking of Leon Rosselson's "Jumbo the Elephant" and a beautiful rendition of Ewan MacColl's "Sweet Thames Flow Softly", but the highlights are Danks's own songs, "Jutland 1916" and the excellent "308".

The CD comes with a booklet explaining the sometimes tenuous links between the material and the overall project and that, perhaps, highlights the flaw, if there is one: some of the links are tenuous, most particularly in terms of the dancing tunes but also because there is little connection with the musical language of the sailors themselves, the shanties and chorus songs which not only tell of life at sea but employ the very rhythms of the work involved.

Seaspeak may not invoke the smell of salt water or the sound of a sea breeze but it really does work as a celebration of the National Maritime Museum. Having listened (three times) to this lovely collection of songs and tunes, and having read the booklet (twice), I really want to return to the National Maritime Museum (to which I have been a number of times before) and see the things that inspired Joe Danks... and I have no doubt that when I see the model of *HMS Rawalpindi* it will be to an internal soundtrack: "308".

MICK VERRIER

ALBUMS, BOOKS

If you would like your folk music or book reviewed,
 please send a copy to the editor,

Celia Kemp, 6 St. Mildred's Road, Chelmsford CM2 9PU.

THE LIVING MOUNTAIN

Jenny Sturgeon

Jenny Sturgeon, with her fine voice and song-writing talent, has produced an album of atmospheric songs about the Cairngorms, inspired by Nan Shepherd's book *The Living Mountain*. In twelve songs she expresses the natural aspects of the area, such as 'Water', 'Frost and Snow', 'Air and Light', as well as our connection with the wilderness - 'The Senses', 'Sleep' and other songs. Jenny accompanies herself on an impressive range of instruments: guitar, piano, harmonium, dulcimer and whistle, and adds bass, synth, percussion, viola and cello by other musicians. However, it is her clear, thoughtful voice that leads each track.

In addition a subtle field recording from the Cairngorms National Park runs through the whole album, including distant birdsong at the start and the end. The purity of the track *Water* is particularly evocative of the cold burn water, not rippling but smoothly following its age-old course over stone and peat. On *Air and Light* Jenny's quiet Scottish accent and delicate guitar convey the soft air, mist and rain of the mountains. The livelier track *Man* describes people talking around the fire, in a way that could be modern or primeval, man being part of nature.

Throughout the album the songs evoke the character of the Cairngorms, where Jenny grew up, but they also provide a dreamy and meditative experience for anyone who is looking to nature for calm and peace. The CD booklet contains all the lyrics, and it is in itself a little book of poetry.

CELIA KEMP

Would you like to be a reviewer?
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Contact the editor, saying what sort of folk you're
most interested in. editor@EssexFolk.uk



TREACLE AND BREAD

Rod Stradling

Rod Stradling has been something of an ever-present on the English music scene for many years now. Indeed, it came as something of a shock when listening to this retrospective CD to learn that the band Oak, a band comprising Rod and his wife, Danny, along with Peta Webb and Tony Engle that put Rod onto many people's radars, were touring the clubs 50 years ago! Brian Peters, no mean player himself, has described Rod's influence on English Melodeon playing as being "considerable" and few would argue with that especially after listening to this impressive selection.

There are 21 tracks on this CD and they cover just about every aspect of Rod's band work over the years from Oak to Phoenix. A good proportion of the tunes will be familiar to many and I suspect I am not the only one who expanded their repertoire courtesy of hearing album tracks featuring Rod's playing. There are old favourites like *Speed the Plough* - given the full electric Tiger Moth treatment - and *Scan Tester's Polkas* - a rather pacy version by Oak - and perhaps some lesser known offerings such as Phil Rush's *Mrs Claxton's Polka*, an infectious composition that deserves to be better known or the beautifully gentle waltz *The Trip We Took Over The Mountains*. Whilst the ever-modest Rod has become one of the doyens of the English dance music scene over the years, he has never been afraid to add tunes to the repertoire from beyond England's shores such as *Bourrée a Gaston Tommier* - here played by Edward II and the Red Hot Polkas (still one of my favourite band names) and the Italian tune *Polesana* from Rod's solo album *Rhythms Of The Wold*. This album is a rich mix of stuff and delivers 76 minutes of fascinating listening. Rod's playing is a model of precision and distinctiveness but what stands out from this collection is the sheer inventiveness of what is on offer. He can play straight - listen to *Highland Mary/Old Tom of Oxford* for example, two tunes closely associated with the Bampton Morris Men for whom Rod has been one of their regular musicians over the years, played as if the dancers were formed up and ready for action - or with a rollicking swing as in the rocking version of *The Cliffe Hornpipe* with Edward II. This Rod Stradling 'greatest hits' CD is long overdue and thanks to Ian Anderson for putting it together. You can grab a copy or download it from the Ghosts From the Basement Bandcamp website. At £9 for the CD or just £7 for the digital download it is money well invested.

MALCOLM WOODS
<https://ghostsfromthebasement.bandcamp.com/album/treacle-bread>

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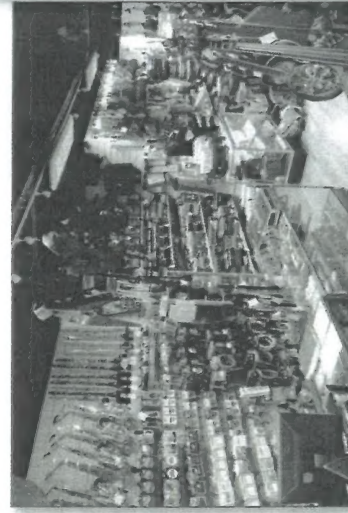
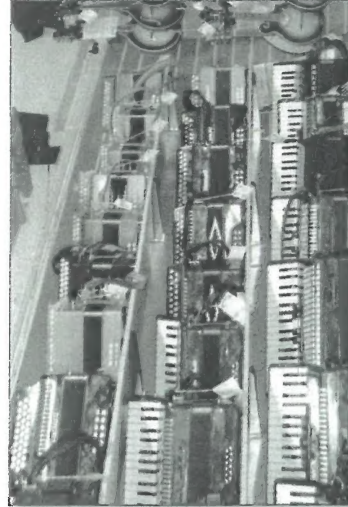
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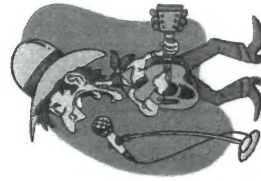
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